

Bios. Osborne

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Woman's Union Missionary Society.

GIVERS FOR JESUS.

“Of a truth, I say unto you that this—hath cast in more than they all; for all these have of their abundance cast into the offerings of God; but she of her penury hath cast in all—that she had.”—ST. LUKE, 21 : 3, 4.

IN the beautiful island of Ceylon many years ago, the native Christians who had long worshipped in bungalows and old Dutch chapels, decided that they must have a church built for themselves. Enthusiastic givers were each eager to forward the new enterprise. But to the amazement of all, Maria Peabody a lone orphan girl, who had been a beneficiary in the girl's school at Oodooville, came forward and offered to give the land upon which to build, which was the best site in her native village.

Not only was it all she owned in this world, but far more, it was her marriage portion, and in making this gift, in the eyes of every native she renounced all hopes of being married. As this alternative in the East was regarded as an awful step, many thought her beside herself and tried to persuade her from such an act of renunciation. “No,” said Maria, “I have given it to Jesus, and as He has accepted it, you must.”

And so to-day the first Christian Church in Ceylon, stands upon land given by a poor orphan girl.

The deed was noised abroad, and came to the knowledge of a young theological student, who was also a beneficiary of the mission, and it touched his heart. Neither could he rest until he had sought and won the rare and noble maiden, who was willing to give up so much in her Master's cause.

Some one in the United States had been for years contributing twenty dollars annually, for the support of this young Hindu girl, but the donor was unknown. Rev. Dr. Poor, a missionary in Ceylon, visiting America about that time, longed to ascertain who was the faithful sower and report the wonderful harvest.

Finding himself in Hanover, N. H., preaching to the students of Dartmouth College, he happened in conversation to hear some one speak of Mrs. Peabody, and repeated "Peabody; what Peabody?" "Mrs. Maria Peabody, who resides here, the widow of a former Professor," was the answer. "Oh! I must see her before I leave," said the earnest man, about to continue his journey.

The first words after an introduction at her house were: "I have come to bring you a glad report, for I cannot but think that it is to you, we in Ceylon owe the opportunity of educating one who has proved as lovely and consistent a native convert, as we have ever had. She is exceptionally interesting, devotedly pious and bears your name."

"Alas!" said the lady, "Although the girl bears my name, I wish I could claim the honor of educating her; it belongs not to

me, but to Louisa Osborne, my poor colored cook. Some years ago in Salem, Mass., she came to me after an evening meeting, saying: "I have just heard that if anybody would give twenty dollars a year, they could support and educate a child in Ceylon, and I have decided to do it. They say that along with the money, I can send a name, and I have come mistress, to ask you if you would object to my sending yours." "At that time," continued the lady, "a servant's wages ranged from a dollar to a dollar and a half a week, yet my cook had for a long time been contributing half a dollar each month, at the monthly concert for foreign missions. There were those who expostulated with her for giving away so much for one in her circumstances, as a time might come when she could not earn. 'I have thought it all over,' she would reply, 'and concluded I would rather give what I can while I am earning, and then if I lose my health and cannot work, why there is the poor-house, and I can go there. You see they have no poor-house in heathen lands for it is only Christians who care for the poor.'"

In telling this story, Dr. Poor used to pause at this point and exclaim: "To the poor-house! Do you believe God would ever let that good woman die in the poor-house? Never!" We shall see.

The missionary learned that the last known of Louisa Osborne, she was residing in Lowell, Mass. In due time his duties called him to that city. At the close of an evening service before a crowded house he related among missionary incidents, as a crowning triumph, the story of Louisa Osborne and Maria Peabody. The disinterested devotion, self-sacrifice, and implicit

faith and zeal of the Christian giver in favored America, has been developed, matured, and well nigh eclipsed, by her faithful namesake in far-off benighted India. His heart glowing with zeal and deeply stirred by the fresh retrospect of the triumphs of the Gospel over heathenism, he exclaimed: "If there is any one present who knows of that good woman Louisa Osborne and will lead me to her, I shall be greatly obliged." The benediction pronounced and the crowd dispersing, Dr. Poor passed down one of the aisles chatting with the pastor, when he espied a quiet little figure apparently awaiting for him. Could it be? Yes it was a colored woman, and it must be Louisa Osborne. With quickened step he reached her, exclaiming in tones of suppressed emotion, "I believe this is my sister in Christ, Louisa Osborne?" "That is my name," was the calm reply. "Well, God bless you Louisa; you have heard my report, and know all. But before we part, probably never to meet again in this world, I want you to answer me one question. What made you do it?" With down cast eyes and in a low and trembling voice she replied: "Well I do not know, but I guess it was my Lord Jesus."

They parted only to meet in the streets of the New Jerusalem, for the missionary returned to his adopted home where, ere long, the loving hands of his faithful native brethern, bore him to his honored grave. The humble hand-maiden of the Lord labored meekly on a while and is ending her failing days, not in a poor house verily, but through the efforts of those who knew her best, in a pleasant, comfortable Old Ladies' Home. "HIM THAT HONORETH ME I WILL HONOR."

The seal of Calvin, one of the great apostles of the Reformation, represents a hand holding a burning heart, illustrative of his life-principle: I GIVE THEE ALL; I KEEP BACK NOTHING FOR MYSELF. Centuries afterward, two humble followers of the Master caught a kindred inspiration from the same divine source. Shall we, to whom so much of privilege and bounty is granted, lay down this marvelous story of self-renunciation, and let its lesson be lost on our own lives ?

TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN, MUCH ALSO WILL BE REQUIRED.



SKETCH OF LOUISA OSBORNE.

LOUISA OSBORNE was born in Boston more than seventy years ago, and when ten or twelve years of age her mother died. She was left to the care of a stepfather, who had always been very kind to the child, but having some better chance for employment in a distant State, decided to place little Louisa where she could be taught a remunerative trade. Shortly after, Louisa was told she was to have a ride, and was driven to the poor-house at Charlestown. The man and woman in charge chanced to have known her mother, and became much interested in this child and decided to place her in a comfortable home. Louisa was bound in her eighteenth year to a farmer, who promised to send the girl to school some months of the year.

She remembered sadly the woman who met her, exclaiming, "What did you bring a nigger for?" Her life proved a very hard one, for the family was large, and often was she so ragged she was the butt of the farm hands. Not allowed to go to school her one desire was to have an education, as she could barely read or write. One day there chanced to be a poor draggled turkey left from a flock, and the farmer said Louisa might have it. She cared for it night and day, and then sold it for a dollar. This was the first money she ever possessed, but to this she was able to add a few others. When her eighteenth birthday was approaching, she told the farmer's wife she was going to leave,

but the woman laughed at the idea, saying, "You have neither money nor clothes, nor place to go to." When the birthday came she rose early for her usual work and then, before the household was awake, walked toward Charlestown. She was successful in getting a situation where she could go to school. When her young mistress, to whom she was much attached, married Prof. Peabody, she went into her service. Louisa had become a Christian, was a regular attendant upon the prayer meetings and was much interested in Foreign Missions. She had heard that \$12.00 would support a girl in Ceylon, and was disappointed to find the sum needed was \$20.00.

Nothing daunted, she determined to contribute the sum required, and to make up the deficiency, procured shoes to bind from the factory at Lyme. This work she did late in the evening after household duties were accomplished. Louisa is now a dignified looking old woman, with snow white hair, modest and quiet in her manner, and very much surprised that anything she has done should be made the subject of a "Leaflet" for a Missionary Society.

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